

Christian Education 31
OF
CHILDREN.

BEING

The Substance of two SERMONS
on *Tit. i. 6.*

WITH

FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

BETWIXT

A PARENT and his CHILD,

ON THE

Plan laid down in these Discourses.

By *WILLIAM WILLETS.*

*But Jesus said, suffer little Children, and forbid them not to
come unto me; for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Mat. xix. 13.*

L O N D O N;

Printed for the AUTHOR. 1750.

Christian Education
OF
CHILDREN.

The substance of two sermons
on the subject.

WITH
TAMMAMAR DIALOGUES.



Has laid down in these Discourses.

THE
MANNER OF TEACHING

THE
ELEMENTS OF THE
CHRISTIAN FAITH.

LONDON:
Printed by the Author.



THE
P R E F A C E.



THE great, and general depravity of Manners, so justly complained of in this learned, this polite, this Christian Country, must very sensibly, and deeply touch the Heart of every Friend of Mankind, and every Lover of his Country.

The greatest undoubted Source of this, is bad, or negligent, and imprudent Education of Children, even from the very first Dawn, and Efforts of Sense and Reason in them.

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Of Consequence, if ever there is a Reformation of our Morals, it must be begun here; without this, the Pulpit, Pillory, and Gibbet preach almost in vain.

'Tis true, many better Heads, and better Pens than mine have been employed already on this Subject; and perhaps exhausted it. What then? The Point is not gained; and till it be, shall the good Cause be ever dropt? No, let the Press, as well as the Pulpit, cry aloud, and spare not; emit Line upon Line, and Precept upon Precept; try what Importunity will do, which sometimes succeeds, where both Reason and Rhetorick fail.

Would to God the Government would interpose and employ their Wisdom, and Authority, (so far as may be) in an Affair of so very great Publick, as well as private Importance. That the Great, and Rich, and Charitable, who can afford to give large Premiums, and Encouragements to those, who breed the fleetest Horses, or Manufacture the finest Linnens, and the like, would bestow as great, or more ample Rewards on those in every Neighbourhood, or Parish, who are found to train up the most virtuous Children; and that they who have no Money,
would

would employ their Tongues and Pens continually to rouse, and keep up the Attention of the Publick to this most necessary, most important Means of our Reformation, Prosperity, and Favour with God and Man.

The Dialogues are only intended as a Specimen of what appears to me the most natural, and talking Manner of instilling Things into Children; which the intelligent Parent may imitate, enlarge, and improve upon at his Pleasure; agreeable to that excellent Precept of God to his People Israel, Deut. vi. 6, 7. And these Words, which I command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way; and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.

Nor let the Questions, or Answers here put into the Mouths of Children, be thought very much out of Character. I had rather make the Child talk like an adult Person, than the Parent talk like a Child. We are apt too much to undervalue the Intellects of Children. The Difference betwixt them and us, perhaps, is not so much in their Capacities of reasoning, as their Materials for that Purpose: Furnish them with
the

the choicest of these, and they will soon find out how to work with them.

All Children, its true, have not Capacities, and Sagacity alike; no more will they when they are grown up. But there are none who are not capable of Religion, and Virtue.

'Tho' I have introduced the Mother, in only one of these Dialogues, yet would I suppose, and wish her to be, at least, equally concerned with the Father, in this early, and pious Care of their Offspring. The divine Intention in the Institution of Matrimony was that both Yoke-Fellows, might draw together in this delightful Labour. Mal. ii. 14, 15.—Yet is she thy Companion, and the Wife of thy Covenant; and did he not make one, yet had be the Residue of the Spirit? And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly Seed.

Just as I had finished these Papers, and waited an Opportunity of sending them to London, I had the Pleasure to read the Right Reverend Bishop of London Letter's, on Occasion of the late Earthquakes; wherein, amongst many other Things greatly to the Purpose, his Lordship has employed three Pages of that seasonable and excellent Letter in a pathetick Recommendation to
Parents,

Parents, of this religious Care in educating their Children, as a most important and necessary Step to that Reformation of Manners, which every good Man wishes; the most awful Voice of God now calls aloud, and his divine Forbearance as yet waits for. I cannot forbear repeating Part of his Address to Parents on this Occasion.

*‘ On you therefore, Fathers and Mothers,
 ‘ your Country, and the Church of God, call for
 ‘ Assistance. Your Endeavours may go a great
 ‘ Way towards saving us: And this wicked
 ‘ Generation may be spared for the hope of seeing the next better.’*



CHRISTIAN

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CHRISTIAN



CHRISTIAN EDUCATION
OF
CHILDREN.

*Having faithful Children, not accused of Riot,
or Unruly. Titus i. 6.*



HERE is a great deal of Truth in that Saying, *Education makes the Man*; makes him what he is; makes one to differ so widely from another. It must be allow'd to have a very great Hand in this, tho' other Things may concur. There is as much Difference betwixt a human Mind, as betwixt a Field or Vineyard cultivated, and uncultivated; or well, or ill manag'd. And Childhood and Youth is the only Time for forming the human Mind. It is then much more susceptible of Impressions, good, as well as bad ones,
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than ever afterwards. What is then learnt is never forgot. The Dispositions and Habits then contracted are scarce ever wore out. *Train up a Child* (says the wise Man) *in the Way he should go; and when he is old he will not depart from it.* Prov. xxii. 6.

Education is of as great Force and Account in Religion and Morality, as in Arts and Sciences. What would become of these in an Age or two, if our Youth were not train'd up to them? They would be quite extinct and lost. Not one in twenty would attain to any great Proficiency in them by mere Strength of Genius, and Self-application; tho' there may be some such Instances. On the contrary, what Proficiency and Improvements are made in them by this Means? Every Age outdoes the preceding; and if it is just the reverse with Religion and Virtue; if these lose Ground and decay instead of advancing, it is not difficult to discover the Cause. Would to God it was as easy to find out and apply a Cure.

The first Rudiments of the useful Arts and Sciences, were perhaps communicated to Men from Heaven, by a divine Impulse, or otherwise; tho' in a less eminent and perceptible Way than those of true Religion; but are ever after propagated by human Industry, tho' under the Eye of Heaven; and Children are early initiated to them by the Care of Parents or Friends, who know the Importance of seizing this Time of Life for these Purposes. The Christian Religion, with its pure and sublime Morality, by a miraculous Energy that accompany'd the first Introduction, and Publication of it to the World, made Converts of old as well as young Sinners; and of some of the most prejudic'd Persons; but by the Grace of God, and Assistance of Heaven, having made its Way into the World, and

and into this or the other District of it, and being settled there, it is justly expected it should be kept up and propagated in the ordinary Way of Education. And consequently this must be the more immediate Concern of Christian Parents.

And this is, I think, plainly hinted in the Words of my Text ; which, upon the first View, will perhaps be thought to refer only to *Bishops* or *Pastors of the Christian Churches* ; but on a closer Examination appear to refer to the *whole Body of Christians*. For *Titus* is exhorted by the Apostles here, to pick out Persons of such unexceptionable good Character, and Heads of such well-regulated, well-govern'd Christian Families, of whom to constitute *Pastors of the Churches*. And consequently it was expected they should agree to this Character and Description before such Choice was made or thought of ; or tho' it never should have been so. The Christian *Moral Character* and *Laws* are the same for *Ministers* as for *others*, only *the former* are more especially obliged to be Examples thereof to *the latter*. The first and immediate Intention of this Rule in my Text was not for *Ministers*, but *the Choice of Ministers*, and consequently for those out of whom this Choice was to be made ; which was generally at that Time out of the Bulk, the soberer Part, however, of common Christians, or of the Society they were to administer to ; they having not then distinct Seminaries on Purpose for training up such. And therefore not *Ministers only* that are Parents, but *every Christian Parent of Children*, should have *faithful Children*, not *accus'd* of Riot or unruly ; as well as be *blameless*, and the *Husband of one Wife* ; as in the foregoing Part of the Verse.

This seems indeed to intimate as if it was in a Parent's own Choice and Power to have sober and good Children ; as much in a Manner, as to have

but one Wife. And so much Power and Opportunity he certainly has to take care of this, that if his *Children* are otherwise, the *Parent* can scarce be entirely blameless.

The better to illustrate and enforce this Subject, a Subject so interesting and important to the Christian Church, to our Country, Neighbourhoods and Families, to the present and future Generations; I shall first consider the Description or a Christian Family, particularly his young Flock of Children, as it is drawn in few Words in my Text, and then suggest the most natural and proper Method for Parents to take in order to bring, and keep their Children up to this Description, and their Obligations thereunto.

I. Let us consider the Description here given of a Primitive Christian's Children.

1. Having *faithful Children*. The Word $\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$ is used sometimes in the *New Testament*, in a something different Sense from what it most commonly imports in other *Greek Authors*. It is used actively, as well as passively, to denote a Person actually believing, or giving Credit to another; as well as deserving Credit from others. Thus it is used, *John xx. 27*, $\kappa\alpha\iota \mu\eta \gamma\iota\upsilon\upsilon \alpha\pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma \alpha\lambda\lambda\alpha \pi\iota\sigma\tau\acute{o}\varsigma$, and be not incredulous, but believing. In this Sense of the Word this Expression wou'd be render'd.

(1.) Having *believing Children*; Children that believe in God, and Christ, and the Gospel. By Children in this Place I understand such as are yet in the Family, and under the Government of their Parents; otherwise it would be hard for them to be answerable for them; and while this is the Case, I think Children must be Believers of the Number of the Faithful, in the Primitive Sense and Use of those Terms; or their Parents must be none. To be a Believer imported the same as to be devoted to
 Father,

Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, in order to learn and practice and improve in true Religion and Virtue. He that was convinc'd there was one living and true God, and that Jesus Christ, and the Holy Ghost, were sent by him to conduct Men to Happiness eternal; and was desirous to learn of them the Way of Salvation; if he had Wife, or Children, or Parents, or Brethren, or Friends, would desire the same for them also; and whatever others of them would do, who were their own Masters, as for him and his, he would devote them all to this divine Institution, this rational admirable Scheme of Salvation; to learn the Truths, and conform to the Rules, and partake of the Honours and Privileges of the Gospel. And shall they not all, thus solemnly devoted to God, be esteem'd Holy, dedicated to God in Christ, set apart from the World, Disciples of Jesus; till such Time however, as by Words or Actions of their own; or both, they renounce the Character of Believers, or of Christians? Which if they do under the Eye and Regimen of their Parents, they must have too great a Share in the Guilt, by some gross Neglect or Mismatchment.

But I rather understand the Word *πίστος* here in the passive, and most common Sense, in which the Word is used by other Authors, as well as those of the *New Testament*, and then it is well render'd by our Translators.

(2.) Having *faithful Children*; i. e. possess'd of that Honesty, Integrity, Sincerity, Ingenuity, and Honour; that Fidelity of Soul, that may be entirely, and safely relied on, void of all Deceit and Fraud, Collusion and Intrigue. True to God and Man, (and particularly to their Parents) whose Minds could not bear the Consciousness of any Falshood, Fraud, Imposition, or Injustice, though they

they were sure never to be detected by others, by any Accident or Concurrence of them, who could not stoop so low as to lie, or equivocate, which is but a lower and more dastardly Way of lying. Whose Word, whose Promise, or Account of Facts may be trusted to as safely, and more safely than the solemn Oaths of others. Who dare to be just and true, even to their own Disadvantage or Danger; who scorn any Advantage, any Gratification or Applause, that may be thought to be obtain'd by Imposition, or any unfair Practice whatsoever.

This is a noble and amiable Quality, in whomsoever it is found. Our blessed Saviour speaks of it with manifest and high Approbation in *Nathaniel*, *John i. 47. Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no Guile*: And it is particularly lovely in Children, nor is it difficult to instil it into them: They are dispos'd to it to a Proverb, though they easily lose it. They are very susceptible of right Notions of Truth, Equity and Honour, and capable of being struck with them: But how often are their tender Minds debauched and corrupted by those, who should cherish only the purest Sentiments in them, either purposely putting them upon little Tricks, or applauding them as Strokes of Wit and Sagacity, or inconsiderately not rewarding and encouraging, it may be letting them suffer for, their Fidelity, and find their Account in Deceit.

This steady Uprightness and Integrity of Heart, is the first and most necessary Foundation of all Virtue, and of all Religion; without which all Pretensions to the one, or the other, are nothing but Hypocrisy, Affectation, and Grimace. Oh! how necessary that it should be laid betimes, and taken all possible Care of in early Life.

2. *Not accused of Riot.* The Word *αἰσῆς*, which we translate *Riot*, is of an extensive Signification,

cation. It takes in every kind of Extravagance Youth is most liable to; all excessive, expensive, hurtful, or unbecoming Indulgencies, that tend to waste the Substance, or the Time, or impair the Health, or blast the good Name. All Excess in Meat, Drink, Sleep, Dress, Sports, and lascivious Lusts, or indecent Freedoms.

Not to be accused of these, imploy the utmost Caution to avoid, not only a Course of any of these evil Practices, not only the grosser Acts, but all Appearances of them, all Approaches towards them; whatever even a censorious World may construe as bordering upon these Vices.

There's a Delicacy which Religion, and particularly the Christian Religion teaches and enjoins us, that is very different from Affectation and Hypocrisy; and from Moroseness and Sordidness too. *When thou fittest to eat with a Ruler* (i. e. at a plentiful Table) *put a Knife to thy Throat, if thou be a Man given to Appetite; be not desirous of his Dainties, for they are deceitful Meat.* Prov. xxiii. 1, 2, 3. and ver. 20. *Be not amongst Wine-bibbers, amongst riotous Eaters of Flesh, for the Drunkard and the Glutton shall come to Poverty. Let us walk honestly* (or decently as it is in the Margin) *as in the Day; not in Rioting and Drunkenness; not in Chambering and Wantonness; not in Strife and Envyings, but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not Provision for the Flesh, to fulfill the Lusts thereof.* Rom. xiii. 13, 14. *But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a Woman to lust after her, hath committed Adultery with her in his Heart.* Mat. v. 28. *But Fornication, and all Uncleaness, or Concupiscence, let it not be once named amongst you, as becometh Saints* (i. e. not capable of being once charged upon any of you) *neither Filthiness, nor foolish-Talking, nor Jestings, which are not convenient.* Eph. v. 34. Young

Young Men exhort to be sober-minded ; in all Things shewing thyself a Pattern of good Works, Tit. ii. 6, 7. In like Manner, that Women adorn themselves in modest Apparel, with Shamefacedness and Sobriety ; not with broider'd Hair, or Gold, or Pearls, or costly Array, (i. e. with Respect to their Rank and Circumstances) but which becometh Women professing Godliness, with good Works. 1 Tim. ii. 9, 10, whose adorning let it not be that outward adorning of plaiting the Hair, and wearing of Gold, or putting on Apparel ; but let it be the hidden Man of the Heart, in that which is not corruptable, even the Ornament of a meek and quiet Spirit, which is in the Sight of God of great Price.

Young Persons, the Children of Christians should, from their tender Years, be principled and fortified against these Follies, which degrade and debauch the Mind ; should be taught, from rational Maxims and Arguments, to have them in Contempt, and should be led to a truer, better Taste of Pleasure ; even to relish, and greatly prefer the pure, proper Pleasures of the Mind, the more exalted Pleasures of Men and Angels ; the Pleasures of Reason and Religion ; and particularly of Charity, and not to take up with, not to immerse themselves in those of mere Brutes or Idiots. They should have instill'd into them, and work'd up in them a true Sense of Conscience, and of Honour ; a due Regard to Character and Reputation ; and a thorough one ; not amongst one Set of Persons only, and that perhaps of the lowest and worst Account, but amongst all Sorts, and especially the wisest, and the best amongst Superiors, Inferiors, and Equals ; not only with other Persons, but with themselves, in their own Breasts ; not being able to bear to know any Evil, or Folly, or Meanness,

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by themselves; and not only among Men, but Angels, and to them, invifible Beings, which not improbably continually furround us; but above all to have the higheft Regard to what the moft certainly omniprefent, all-feeing, high, and holy God fees, and knows, and thinks of them, and their Behaviour. Not accused of Riot, of any Extravagancies or Indecencies before God, Confcience, Angels, or Men. It's true, the Words of my Text refer to the laft only; but there is no fure Way to fecure this effectually, but by having a Regard to the other alfo. I proceed now to the laft Part of the Character, or Defcription that becomes the Children of Chriftians.

3. *Not unruly.* The Word fignifies refractory, unbroke, unſubdu'd, ungovernable, or untractable; not ſubordinate to proper Authority, particularly to parental Authority; heady, ſelf-will'd, rebellious. 'Tis of much the ſame Signification with that known Phraſe among the *Jews*, *Sons of Belial*. 'Tis too common a Character in all Parts and Ages of the World, eſpecially in ours, to need much Deſcription, and is a Character of very ill Conſequence in the World, and in Society. For thoſe who take it up, and contract it in their Youth, under the ſlack, negligent, Ely-like Government, or rather Anarchy of irregular Families, ſeldom loſe it, but carry it into the World with them through all the Stages and Stations of Life, and are more or leſs turbulent, and miſchievous in all; and the greater Capacities, and more Power and Opportunities of exerting themſelves they have, the more Hurt they do. They will ſcarce ever hear Reason, or ſubmit to Rules, and prove as ill Magiſtrates, Subjects, Citizens, Neighbours, Heads of Families, or Servants, as they were Children.

How much are Oppressions, Rebellions, Riots, Mutinies, Broils, and Quarrels of all Kinds, and many other Evils owing to this Temper and Character ; and yet this owing in a great Measure to a faulty Education, and of Consequence to Parents ?

I know there are vastly different natural Tempers in Children ; as different perhaps almost as those of the Lion and the Lamb. But, as even the Fierceness of that wild Animal is to be subdu'd by the Skill and Industry of Man, so likewise that, which in any Degree resembles it in the human Species ; and may easily be done too by those who have the Opportunity of taking it in Time, and correcting or guarding against the earliest Symptoms of it : But if suffered to get a-head, may be much more impossible to be overcome than the fiercest, wildest, and most noxious of brute Creatures. For this Reason under the Law of *Moses*, a Son that had revolted from the Authority of his Parents, was ordered to be made a publick Example of, and stoned to Death. *Deut. xxi. 18.—21. If a Man have a rebellious Son, which will not obey the Voice of his Father, or the Voice of his Mother, and that when they have chastised him, will not hearken unto them, then shall his Father and his Mother lay hold of him, and bring him out unto the Elders of his City, and unto the Gate of his Place, and they shall say unto the Elders of his City, This our Son is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey our Voice ; he is a Glutton, and a Drunkard : And the Men of his City shall stone him with Stones that he die. So shalt thou put away Evil from among you, and all Israel shall bear and fear.*

There is no other Authority so engaging as parental Authority ; and this rightly exercised, prepares them to submit to civil Authority, yea,
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to the divine Authority of God. But those who break thro' that, commonly grow to that Degree of Unruliness, as neither to fear God, nor regard Man, nor have any Government of themselves.

A tame Submission to any usurp'd Authority or unjust Imposition, is a Weakness; but Stubbornness, and Unruliness towards just Authority, on the other Hand, is by much the worse Extreme of the two, and of worse Consequence.

Reason should rule a rational Creature, be it who or what it will that suggests it to him; and it is his Wisdom to observe, his Madness to break in upon, right Order; and this Madness is most effectually prevented, this Wisdom most easily instill'd in their first Years, and fits them as much for any Kind of Authority in after-Life, as for any Kind of Subjection which Providence may allot them. For they that know best how to submit to Order and Authority, know best how to conduct and exercise it over others, when called thereto.

Such, so amiable, so promising is the Character of a primitive Christian's Children. Wou'd to God it were more generally than, alas! it is, the Character of a modern Christian's! Wou'd to God it might revive, and shine forth again in the next Generation! What shall be done to promote so desirable an Event? A proper Care in their Education.

II. I am now to suggest the most natural and proper Methods Parents should take, to make and keep their Children thus faithful, sober, and tractable; in doing which I shall pursue that Order, which seems to me most natural, and most practicable. And that which offers itself first to your Notice, and to your Care, who are Parents, for this Purpose, is,

1. *Early to establish, and constantly maintain your own Authority, a true parental Authority over them.* By which I mean a wise and kind Authority; not brutish, churlish, humourfome, or tyrannical.

Let all your Commands, Restraints, and entire Management of them be well consider'd, and founded in Reason. And then you may be, and should be steady and peremptory in them, (which is the great Secret of preserving Authority over Children;) whereas, if they are rash and foolish, and such as you are oblig'd to vary from, or do vary from frequently, or relax, it will greatly weaken your Authority, even before your Children are capable of judging of the Justness, Wisdom, or Importance of Things, much more afterwards; and tho' it be easy to get this Authority at first, and keep it up, yet if once lost, it is very hard to recover it.

And at the same Time that you preserve this Steadiness and Firmness in your Government, and Conduct of them, let it also be attended, and temper'd with Tenderness; not mixt with Austerity. Even when Severities are necessary, let them be executed with Discretion; with paternal Reluctance, and a manifest Command and Government of yourselves, and not with Rage.

In short, found your Authority over them in their Love and Esteem of you, rather than Terror.

(1.) In their *Love and Gratitude*, I mention this first, because, as Parents are commonly the first Persons whom Children are acquainted with, so this is one of the first Affections they are capable of towards them. They soon perceive from whom their Supports and Enjoyments so immediately come; may easily be made sensible of it, and of their Parents great Affection towards them; and

and Ingratitude is not an Infant-Vice. They that arrive at it must, in some Measure, be harden'd thro' the Deceitfulness of Sin.

The Affection of Children towards their Parents is easily gained, and capable of having a great Influence over them if preserved, and made a proper Use of; especially if it be joined with *Esteem* and *Reverence*. Your Superiority of Age, and Capacity, and their Dependance on you, will give them the first Impressions of this Kind; but it must be kept up by their Observation of your Wisdom, Integrity, and true Dignity of Behaviour.

For this Reason, the Parents who would preserve the Respect, Esteem, and dutiful Regard of their Children, should be as cautious how they behave before them, as the Children before their Parents, tho' upon something different Considerations; as they should be afraid of incurring your Displeasure, so should you of incurring their Contempt by any Meanness of Behaviour or Temper. Govern yourselves, if you would govern them, and let them not see you foil'd by any Lusts or Passions.

The deceiving Children, in some Cases, for their Good, has sometimes been pleaded for; but I can by no Means approve of it: They are almost sure sometime or other to discover it; and whenever they do so, to think meanly of the Person who can stoop to such a low Way of gaining a Point; and in Return, will make no Scruple to deceive you, and succeed as well, if not better perhaps. And where there can be any Occasion for such a Method of managing them, the proper Authority of a Parent over them has been sadly neglected and lost.

I mention this Course of Parents to establish their Authority over their Children in the first Place,

Place, before their instilling into them even Religious Sentiments and Principles, because this is first to be done, and what they are first capable of, even before they are capable of any Notion of God or Religion. And if this Method was taken with them betimes, the Rod would be but very little necessary while they were very young, and never afterwards, to establish your Authority. Nature, Reason, and Habit would do it much better.

2. From hence *give them a Notion of the supreme Father, God*; whose paternal Authority over us all is not only the most affecting and endearing, but will be most easily conceived of by them, when they have been duly taught to esteem and love you, their immediate earthly Parents.

Let them know, that altho' they see him not; he is every where, always near them, always sees them, knows their very Thoughts: That he is a Being of boundless Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, and inviolable Truth: That in, and by him, and for him, we all live, and move, and have our Being: That he will accept of their Thanks, and Praise, and Love, and Care to please him; will hear their Prayers, and be their best Protector and Guide.

Let them see continually how much you reverence him, and they will do the like.

Acquaint them early with his Works of Creation, and Providence; which if done with any Discretion, may be done in such a Manner as shall delight, and not be irksome to them.

In order to make all useful Instruction delightful to them, especially Religious Instruction, let it be given them (whether by Word or Book) not as a Task, much less as a Penance for some Fault, but rather as a Reward for their good Behaviour,

haviour, and always in good Humour; and with such a Variety as is peculiarly grateful to Children.

First teach them to *love* God, and then *fear* him with a true *filial Fear*; give them all the amiable Ideas of him possible, that afterwards they may fear his Displeasure out of a Value for his Favour, more than a slavish Dread of Punishment. In short, teach them their Duty to God in the same Way, and from the same kind of Motives you have taught them their Duty to yourselves:

There is a beautiful Resemblance, and great Connexion betwixt paternal and divine Authority; a natural and easy Gradation, and Transition from one to the other, and when your Authority and Government of them is intended to introduce his, you will be more solicitous that it may be like his, wise and good. And, in this Method, you will find an earlier Capacity, and a greater Disposition in them to be acquainted with God, and pay a devout Regard to him, than most Parents are apt to imagine; and when you have taught them to fear God, you have an additional Security of their dutiful Behaviour towards you. The next Step is,

3. *Teach them just Notions of Virtue and Morality, both personal and social.* Inform them what Sort of Creatures they are, made up of Spirit and Flesh, Soul and Body, capable of Knowledge, Reason, and Self-government, as well as Sense, Appetite, and Passion; accountable to God their Maker, and heavenly Father; accountable to themselves, their own Judgment and Conscience; accountable to you, and accountable to the World for their Conduct and Behaviour. That there are Duties and Regards owing from them to all these.

(1.) *To almighty God.* For Instance, that they set him always before them; fear him, reverence
and

and adore him ; obey him ; delight in him, and the Contemplation of his Works and Attributes ; wish and endeavour, above all Things, to please him, and be like him ; trust and rely upon him ; submit and resign themselves and their Wills entirely to him, and maintain a grateful Sense of his Goodness to them in all the Comforts and Benefits they receive ; receiving them as from him, by whatsoever Instruments or Channels they are more immediately conveyed ; looking upon him as the Fountain of all Good ; upon his Favour as their Life, and his Loving-kindness as better than Life ; his Displeasure more grievous and dreadful than Death.

(2.) *To themselves.* That they pay a most scrupulous Regard to the well-weighed Dictates of their Reason and Conscience, and next to that, to their Reputation ; restraining and controuling every Appetite and Affection that would break in upon, and do Violence to these.

The Loss of this Self-government, and giving the Appetites and Passions the Head, is the utter Inversion of all Order in the human Frame and Constitution, which it is a great Question whether it ever recovers any more.

In no Part of Life, are the Appetites and Passions so easily brought under Government, and bent and inured to it, as in Childhood. And yet most Parents then contribute to heighten, instead of bridling them in that critical Season, to their own Sorrow afterwards, and perhaps to their Children's eternal Ruin.

How easily would they *then* learn that Self-denial, and Patience of Disappointment, and Command of themselves, which would greatly tend to their Comfort and Credit thro' Life, and their everlasting Happiness.

Teach

Teach them therefore to do Justice to themselves, to the better Part of themselves, yea to Soul and Body both ; to act the Part of spiritual intellectual Beings, the Offspring of God, and not the Part of mere Flesh and Blood ; of Brutes, or worse.

Teach them not only to know what Purity, Temperance, Calmness of Mind, with yet a proper Resolution and Firmness on just Occasions mean ; but to love, and aspire to, and maintain and exercise these Virtues, and hate, and guard against, their contraries.

(3.) *To Mankind.* (1.) *In general.* That they be sincere, strictly true and faithful, just and upright, doing unto others, as they could desire, or reasonably expect they should do by them in the like Cases ; compassionate and kind, ready to do Good, as they have Opportunity, to all Men ; especially to help and relieve those who are in any Kind of Need or Affliction. In Scripture Language, that they be not only pure, but also peaceable, gentle, easy to be intreated, full of Mercy and good Fruits, without Partiality, and without Hypocrisy. (2.)

In particular. That they behave in the several Relations they stand in, or shall ever enter into with others in the Course of their Lives, agreeable to all the particular Duties of such Relations, which are to be distinctly taught them, and inculcated on them, that they may know them, understand them, remember them, judge of the Reasonableness of them, love them, and discern and hate the Deformity of all the contrary Vices. That they may be fully instructed and prepared to behave aright as Children, as Brethren, as Subjects, as Neighbours, as Husbands or Wives, as Masters or Servants, as Parents, or Magistrates, and the like, as their State and Circumstances are, or may be in the Course of Providence.

Children will easily learn these Rules of Morality and Virtue, if proper Pains be taken with them; and will as certainly approve and love them, if fairly represented to them; and love and honour the Persons they observe, or know to practise them; and be disgusted with a contrary Practice, which, how far it may contribute to make and keep them virtuous themselves, and guard them against many Temptations, let any one judge; especially to keep them from the greater Transgressions. And for this Purpose farther therefore,

Warn them well, and frequently of the Dangers they are surrounded with of losing their Virtue. While they are thus early acquainted with the Nature, the most amiable Nature thereof, and solicitous to maintain so lovely a Character, alarm them, I say, with the Danger they are in of miscarrying, notwithstanding, so as to put them upon the utmost Caution, Watchfulness, Sensibility of any the least wrong Step they may possibly make, Resolution of better Behaviour for the Time to come, and the strictest rational Government of themselves. Let them know their Dangers from every Quarter; from the Devil, the World, and the Flesh.

(1.) *From the Flesh.* The Temptations that arise from this Quarter, are perhaps the first they are exposed to; and therefore to be first warn'd, and guarded against, without these, neither the Devil, nor the World could have much Influence, to corrupt, or mislead them.

The bodily Animal Appetites and Passions, in their proper Place, and Bounds, are useful and necessary; but they must be kept to this, restrain'd and govern'd by a Force and Power not their own, or they'll shoot out into very extravagant ones; deprave the human Mind, and precipitate a Man into the very worst Enormities.

This

This Government of the Animal Lusts, Affections, and Passions in the human Race, is the Province of *Reason*. But they have the Start of Reason. Till the understanding of Children comes to some Degree of Maturity, it is the Province of Parents to govern the Appetites and Passions of their Children by their Reason, as their own Reason ripens for this Purpose, to lead, and innure it by Degrees, and under their Eye, to the Discharge of this important Function.

With this View, they should be made to know the Danger of their getting Head, and not being kept under, as much as *Fire and Water* unheeded or misplaced, nor kept at a proper Distance, and to a proper Ebb; that *they are good Servants but bad Masters*.

You may soon, and easily bring Children to a Shame, and Disdain of not being able to deny any of their Appetites, or bridle any of their Passions, where there is just Cause for it; and it shall be easy to them all their Lives after, but for want of taking the proper Care, and the proper *Opportunity* with them, they may soon get such a Head as neither themselves nor you, nor all the Men in the World, shall ever be able to govern them. This they ought to dread, as well as you; and 'tis you must teach them to dread it.

(2.) *From the World*. Let them know how degenerate and corrupt Mankind generally are; how catching and infectious, evil Customs; how gradually and insensibly many Persons of good Education have wore off the good Impressions, and imbid'd bad ones; how others have plunged at once into evil Courses by the Force of bad Examples; how many never were well instructed, and principled with a Love of Virtue, therefore no wonder they should be carried away with the Stream.

Lead them to observe what dreadful Progress Sinners make in Sin; and how they are harden'd thro' the Deceitfulness of it.

Make them sensible how much Infection, and Poison too of the worst Kind, Poison of the Mind, there is in evil Company; how the worst Part of Mankind have ever been a Snare, even to the better educated, better disposed from the Beginning of the World, as well as contributed mutually to make one another worse and worse.

Refer them to Instances within their own Observation, as well as from History; and let them be convinced by all the most proper and affecting Examples, how necessary it is for them to renounce the World, to dread the ill Impressions that are liable to be made upon them by it; to call up all their Resolution against following the Multitude to do Evil. And above all, and together with all this, continually and earnestly to implore the Conduct of Divine Grace to befriend and restrain them.

Have you too a watchful Eye over the Company they keep, and the Effects it has upon them; that if possible you may prevent any Taint from hence upon their Mind and Morals; or at the worst, stop it and purge it off, before it produces its most dangerous fatal Effects, and becomes incurable.

This is perhaps the most dangerous fatal Snare of all to the Virtue of young Persons. And yet there is another Source of Danger you would do well to warn them of, viz.

(3.) *From the Devil; who tempted our first Parents, and drew them into Sin, and is said to go about as a roaring Lion, seeking whom he may Devour. 1 Pet. v. 8. and to work in the Children of Disobedience. Eph. ii. 2. whom we are warned in Scripture,*

Scripture, not to give Place to; Eph. iv. 27. but to resist, and he will fly from us. James. iv. 7. which, with many other Passages of Scripture, seem to intimate his being suffered, in some Way, and Degree or other, to tempt the Children of Men, perhaps, by exciting and heightening their Appetites and Passions; perhaps by suggesting falacious Arguments, or at least Excuses for Sin, or discouraging from Duties, or otherwise; for he may have many Devices. 2. Cor. ii. 11. But they all seem to tend to gain upon us by Means of our Lusts and Passions; because those who give too much Way to them, are said to give Place to him. If we keep under these therefore, we resist or disappoint him. But the Apprehension of such an evil Spirit, ready to set in with the Temptations that arise from the Flesh, or the World, should make us the more apprehensive of Danger, and careful to preserve our Virtue. And this Danger, as well as the forementioned, Parents should early inculcate on their Children.

But by this Time, they will be ready to be under some Apprehensions, not only of their Danger, but from their Consciouſness of having yielded, more or less, to some or other of these Temptations, and done amiss; and therefore,

(5.) *Let them know what the Saviour of the World has done and suffer'd for them; and what Measures God has taken by him to reclaim, reform, and save Mankind; even the worst of Sinners. That he took our Nature on him, liv'd in it without any the least Sin, a most spotless, honourable, exemplary, useful Life on Earth; taught the most excellent Rules of Life; wrought many Miracles; dy'd for our Sins, and rose again for our Justification, and ascended into Heaven, where he sits at the Right-hand of God in Glory. That by him, and for his Sake,*

Sake, God will raise us from the Dead; will pardon the Sins we repent of and forsake; will assist us, as well as accept us, in leading a sincerely Religious Holy Life; and reward it with eternal Life and Happiness hereafter. That by following him, by his Direction, Help, and Conduct, we may effectually, and assuredly overcome the Devil, the World and the Flesh. That he by his Gospel calls all Men every where to repent, and turn to God, and do Works meet for Repentance, *i. e.* suitable to the Gospel, Design, and Scheme of reforming Mankind. To promote this, he has set up a Nursery or Seminary among Men, with proper Officers, Ordinances, Rules, and Privileges for carrying on this great and good Work of reforming the World. That they are already, by the kind Providence of God, and your early Faith and Care separated from a too generally degenerate World, and dedicated to God, and Christ, and the Holy Ghost, to be of the Number of God's peculiar People.

In Consequence of this it is, that you instruct them in the Principles, and Duties of Christianity; pray for them, and teach them to look upon themselves, and pray to God, as a Father in Christ.

Teach them therefore to Love and Honour this their Saviour and Lord; and to hearken most respectfully to his Instruction, and imitate his Example, and to cherish all the serious Impressions, that are ever made upon the Mind, as the Influence of the good Spirit of God, which it is dangerous, as well as ungrateful, to resist and quench; lest God withdraw him from them.

See that they duly attend the Ordinances of the Gospel; and do it with Understanding and Application of Mind, as well as an external Deportment,
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that is grave, decent, and becoming Sacred Things.

Innure them always from the very first to hear, and read with Attention, by constantly enquiring after, and taking Account from them when they have done, what they have heard, or read. For want of this many Children of no bad Capacities, contract a Habit of hearing, and even of reading by Rote, tho' they read aloud; and find some Difficulty in overcoming this Kind of Absence in reading, and hearing, when they are grown up, and it gives them, it may be, great Uneasiness. And therefore,

(6.) *Watch and attend to your Children's Temper, and Turn of Mind;* and the Consequences of your Instruction of them; and the Improvements they make under the same; as you would to the Consequences and Success of any other of your most momentous Undertakings; that if any Pains and Endeavours are insufficient, you may increase them; if any Methods, or Steps are wrong, or suit not however with the Individuals, you may change them.

Study each of your Children, study human Nature, that you may the better know how to manage it in them; know all the Springs and Movements of their Souls, that you may touch this, or that, or several at once; what is to be done by Fear; what by Shame; what by a Sense of Gratitude, and Honour; what by Emulation, and the like.

If possible, discover early their principal prevailing Foible, or Folly, whatever it is; the Sin that most easily besets them; that is most natural, or growing to be most habitual to them; that you may counter-work, and counterminc it; may bend your wisest Counsels, your greatest Watchfulness,

fulness, your most strenuous Efforts and Endeavours against that, and rescue them from it.

(7.) *Wrestle daily with God for them by fervent Prayer.* Paul may plant, and Apollos water; so may Parents; but God must give the Increase. And for this he should be sought unto. Importune him in Secret for them. Pray for them likewise before them. Let them be daily Witnesses of your earnest Applications to the Throne of Grace on their Behalf, and if it be possible Parties also, joining heartily and affectionately in these your devout Addresses.

But I go on now to shew,

III. The Obligations Christian Parents are under to do all this, and every thing in their Power to render, and keep their Children good. 'Tis not a Matter of small Moment, or of Indifference to you, Sirs; for consider,

1. Are they not your own Offspring? your Flesh and Blood? Parts of yourselves? Can any Thing be nearer to you? Nature calls upon you aloud to concern yourselves for their Welfare, as for your own. Have you not brought them into the World, to be exposed to Dangers innumerable, and of infinite and eternal Consequence; and can you be void of all Concern, how they pass these important Trials; or to take all the possible Precautions in your Power to secure them? 'Tis quite unnatural to neglect them, especially in their most helpless, most exposed State of Childhood and Youth. You would probably think it so to neglect their bodily Health and Welfare; but is it not really much more so to neglect their Minds, and Morals, in the very critical Time of forming them, or ruining them almost unchangeably? And much worse if you not only neglect the former, but actually contribute to the latter.

2. They

2. They are the *Offspring of God*, the Children of God, intrusted with you, and committed to you for this Purpose, and you are accountable to him for them.

God Almighty required the *Israelites* of old to teach their Children his Statutes; and complains of them in such Terms as these: Ye have taken *my Sons and my Daughters*, and have made them pass thro' the Fire to *Molock*. And in another Place, he complains, they taught their little ones to delight in idolatrous Sacrifices, and assist at them by gathering Sticks for them, and the like, instead of observing his Ordinances.

If you neglect your Duty to them, or act a contrary Part, are not you accountable before God for all the Wickedness they shall ever commit; and guilty of the Blood of their immortal Souls, if these should perish eternally thro' your Mismanagement of your Trust, as there is great Danger? And tho' they should escape thro' the Grace of God, and other Means than your's, yet is your Guilt much the same.

3. They are the *Disciples of Christ*, purchas'd with his Blood; own'd, and espous'd by him; received into his Church and Fold; elect, holy, and beloved; and it were better a Millstone were hung about any Person's Neck, and he were cast into the Midst of the Sea, than that he should offend, *i. e.* pervert, or cause to stumble, or fall, one of these little ones.

They are the Lambs of Christ's Flock, and you are constituted a kind of Officers in the Christian Church, Bishops or Pastors, Tutors, Ushers over them, and under the great Shepherd and Bishop of Souls. And you have, or should have, solemnly avow'd this high Charge of them, and can no Ways release yourselves from it.

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4. They

4. They are your *dear Country's Children*, and the *Publick* expects, and has Reason to expect it of you, that you train them up in the most likely Way to make them virtuous, useful Members of the civil Community; and there is no other certain, no other so likely Way for this, as bringing them up good Christians.

Rebellious, civil Discords, and the Seeds of them; the Success of Popish Emissaries in this Protestant, this free enlighten'd Country; the Multitudes of Robberies, Pyracies, Murders, Oppressions, Frauds, Quarrels, Drunkenness, Debauchery, and Prophaneness that abound amongus, and increase I am afraid continually, are owing to a wrong, or the Neglect of a right Education and Care of Children. And nothing but a very great Reform in this Respect, will rectify these sad Enormities, without a Miracle, or save our Country from Ruin: To conclude.

(1.) You that are *Parents* therefore, as you value the Favour of God, the Peace of your own Consciences, and the Comfort that immediately arises from dutiful and good Children; as you value the Credit and Interest of Religion in the present, and succeeding Generations; as you value the present and everlasting Welfare of your dear Offspring; as you desire the Welfare and Reformation of your Country, and the Continuance of the Favour of God to it, take all possible Care in the Discharge of this important Duty.

(2.) You that are *Children*, do you also enter heartily into this salutary Scheme, this well-laid Design of our holy Religion, to render you early and truly wise and good, and honourable, and useful, and happy in both Worlds.

O, make your Parents Duty easy, and delightful to them, by your ready Concurrence with them
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in all these their Endeavours for your Good, and your daily Proficiency in Virtue.

By this Means you will make Advances daily in Wisdom, and in Favour with God, and Man.

But if you reject, or slight this Advice, assure yourselves, you will dearly repent, and rue it sometime or other; and perhaps (which God forbid) when it is too late.

On the Plan laid down in the fore
going Discourses.





FAMILIAR DIALOGUES

BETWIXT A

Parent and his Child,

On the Plan laid down in the foregoing Discourses.

And these Words which I command thee this Day, shall be in thine Heart. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine House, and when thou walkest by the Way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up. Deut. vi. 6, 7.

DIALOGUE I.

Parent. **W**HOSE Child are you?
Child. Your's.

Parent. Why do you think so?

Child. Because you teach me to call you *Father*, and are fond of me, and maintain me.

Parent. 'Tis true, my Dear, I provide you Food to satisfy your Hunger; Cloaths to cover you, and keep you warm; a House to shelter you from the Severities of the Weather; an easy Bed to sleep on; a Variety of innocent Amusements to divert you; and proper Advice and Physick to cure you when you are not well. At my Cost you have been properly attended in your most helpless Infancy

fant State, when you could neither go nor stand, nor tell your Wants ; have been preserved from all Sorts of Injuries, kept clean, and wholesome, and healthful, and taught by Degrees to go, and speak, and any Thing else you were capable of learning, that might be useful to you. Now what do you think induces me to do all this for you ? Did you ever do any Thing, or any Thing equivalent to this, for me ?

Child. No. But I will do whatever I can for you as long as I live, and whatever you would have me do ; and always love and honour you ; and shall never think I can make you Amends for such Kindness to me.

Parent. You promise fair, and I hope will be as good as your Word ; and assure you, you shall never be a Loser by such Dutifulness. Whatever I require of you shall be as much for your own Good as mine, and more ; even those Things wherein I may be obliged to deny your Inclinations.

Child. Will my dear Father ever deny me any Thing I have a mind to ?

Parent. Not willingly, my Dear, but out of Kindness to you. I have seen more of the World, and the Consequences of Things than you ; and may perceive Danger, even to yourself, where you apprehend none, but only Pleasure and Delight ; should I see you running headlong towards a deep Pit, or Precipice, or Place where I knew were wild Beasts or an infectious Distemper ; would it not be a real Kindness to stop you, tho' it were by Violence, and ever so much against your Will ?

Child. The greatest Kindness you could do me ; and I will confide in the Wisdom, Experience, and good Intentions of one who was born so long before me ; and from whom I have received already so many indubitable Proofs of good Will.

DIALOGUE

DIALOGUE II.

Child. **O** My dear Papa, I have thought over and over of what you said to me Yesterday, and dreamt of it in the Night, and long to talk with you again, and ask you Questions.

Parent. Come then, my Child, what Question have you to ask? I shall answer them with Pleasure.

Child. You made me sensible how much I am indebted to you for my Being, and Protection, and innumerable Benefits, particularly during my Infancy. Were you once a Child like me, and had you such a Father to take Care of you?

Parent. Yes, I remember him with Pleasure, tho' he died before you were born.

Child. And your Father had a Father, I suppose; and his Father, perhaps, the like before him.

Parent. True, my Dear.

Child. But was it always so? When, and how did this Relation, and Succession of Parents and Children begin?

Parent. It must of Necessity have had a Beginning, and it had so. That *Clock* you hear strike one, then two, then three, &c. at certain Distances of Time, from Day to Day, did not always do so; but was contrived, and made, and set on going, some Years since, by an ingenious Artist, who still looks after it, and keeps it in Order. And he that contriv'd, and made all the World; the Sun, Moon, and Stars of Heaven, that rise, and set, and distinguish Night and Day; the Earth, and all the Trees, and Plants, and Grass that grow out of it; and all the Creatures that inhabit it; and Man

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at the Head of them all, and preserves them all in their Places, Courses, and Successions; he is the first Origin, the *Supreme Father* of the whole Universe; even God, who never had a Beginning, but always was, always must be unchangeably the same.

Child. O! I am astonished at the Thought, and yet it must be so. But where is this *Supreme Father*? Cannot I go to him, and see him, and converse with him, as I do with you?

Parent. Where is he, Child! Where is he not! He is every where; he is always present with you, and with every one of his Children, and every one of his Creatures; more nearly, more intimately so, than it is possible for me to be with you. He continually upholds and preserves every Faculty we have of Action, Perception, Speech, or Thought, and sees, and knows every Thing that passes in the World, or in the very Heart of Man.

Child. Does he know my Thoughts before I speak them?

Parent. Most assuredly he does; for he is the Father of Spirits. He endowed you with the Power of Thought, and constantly preserves every Faculty of your Mind; and therefore knows every the least Motion or Affection thereof.

Child. You surprize me. I thought I had no other Eye to stand in Awe of so much as your's; but find there is one, who sees what you see not, even my secret Thoughts; I cannot help being greatly concerned about my Behaviour towards so great a Being. I want to know more of him; what Power he has to do me Good or Hurt; what are his Dispositions towards me; what will be pleasing or displeasing to him; wherein he resembles, and wherein he may differ from you, my immediate Father, whom I know, and love, and confide in.

But,

But, in short, I scarce know what Questions to ask you about him.

Parent. I will save my dear Child the Labour of studying for Questions upon this Head, by giving you as short and plain an Account as I can, of what is most material for you to know concerning him; and at the same Time answer any Questions you may interpose as well as I can, and you are able to understand Things. But this must be some other Time, because my Business calls me off at present.

Child. Let it be soon, my dear Papa.

Parent. God bless you.

DIALOGUE III.

Parent. **N**OW, my dear Child, I have a leisure Hour at your Service: Can you leave your Play, to talk on serious Subjects with your Father?

Child. If I could not I should be very unworthy of such a *Father*, and of such *Instructions*. Besides, the Subject you are now by Promise to go upon, is of all Subjects the most engaging. To be acquainted with another *Father*, even greater than you, promises me new, and high Delight.

Parent. You cannot promise yourself too much from it. He is infinitely greater and better than I, or any Man, or any Being besides himself; the greatest, and the best of all Beings, and of *Fathers*. He can do whatever he pleases; can make, or destroy the Earth, the Sun, the World, in an Instant, as easily as you can move a Finger: But he is as good as he is wise and powerful. He consults and delights

delights in the Happiness and Perfections of his Creatures. There is no Creature, not a Sparrow or a Worm, but shares his Protection, Bounty, Care, and Goodness. Whatever little Good, or Protection you may seem to receive from me, or any other Creature, comes ultimately, and chiefly from him; nor can any Thing, or Person else, be more than an Instrument in his Hand, of conveying Benefits to you. He makes the Earth to yield us Food; and makes that Food wholesome, nourishing, and pleasant to us. 'Tis his Wine, and Milk, and Meat we feed on; his Wool and Flax that furnishes us with comfortable and decent Garments. He causes us to breathe, and live, and move; to sleep, and awake again; or, as the Scriptures speak, *in him we live, and move, and have our Being*. 'Tis for this Reason you are taught to thank him for your Food, and ask his Blessing on it; to commit yourself to his Protection every Night, and thank him for it every Morning.

Child. And is he pleased with these my Prayers and Praises?

Parent. Yes, if they come from your Heart; from a grateful, humble, dutiful Sense of your Dependance upon him; because such a Temper of Mind, so cherished, kept up continually, and improved, is for your Good; therefore he is pleased with it; for no one can wish you so well as your Heavenly Father doth.

Child. Not you?

Parent. No, not I, nor you yourself.

Child. Why does he wish me well?

Parent. Because you are his Offspring, whom he has made a reasonable Creature too, and so much liker, and nearer to himself, than the Brute Creatures; and yet he wishes well to all his

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Creatures,

Creatures, in their Places, and does them good ; he designed them for Good, and obliges them to do one another Good ; and rational Creatures to do it of Choice, and with Pleasure, as he himself does. As God is every where, knows all Things, and can do whatever he pleases in Heaven, and in Earth ; so he constantly over-rules all Things and Events, for the Good of the Whole, or the greatest Good ; for *He is good to all, his tender Mercies are over all his Works.* His Goodness so infinitely exceeds the Goodness of a all other Beings, and all their comparatively little Goodness is so entirely owing to his, that our blessed Saviour might well say, *There is none Good but one, that is God.*

Child. I said I wou'd do every Thing in my Power to serve, and please you, on Account of your Goodness to me ; but O! what do I then owe to this best of Beings, my Heavenly Father, of whom you tell me?

Parent. Be sure you owe him the highest possible Degree of Gratitude and Love ; so to love him, as to love nothing else in Comparison of him ; or to love every Thing else that is good chiefly for his Sake, from whence, even from whose Goodness, it proceeds ; who makes it so good, and so good to you.

Child. I would be very solicitous to please so great and good a God and Father ; and especially not to displease him ; and therefore want to know wherein I may be liable ever to do that. Is he ever angry, as you sometimes have been, when I or any one else has done amiss ?

Parent. No one can be so perfectly averse to Evil as God is ; and tho' he is not of like Passions with us, is not angry in such a Way as to imploy any Weakness, or Imperfection ; yet may he be said to be angry, and very angry too, with the Wicked,

Wicked, or those who do amiss; and the Anger of so great a Being must be very dreadful; and not less, but more so (to an ingenuous Mind) for his Goodness; for even his Anger arises from his Goodness.

Child. How can that be?

Parent. All Evil is naturally hurtful, not to God, but to his Creatures, whom he wishes well, and on that Account is most displeasing to him. If you do amiss, you hurt yourself at least, and perhaps others also; and this must needs displease your Friend, who desires your highest Welfare, and that of every other Being too, which your Misconduct may possibly injure.

Child. This is indeed the greatest Reason, that can be, why I should fear to offend him.

Parent. And it is a Reason, too, why you should trust in him. For if you hurt not yourself, he will never hurt you, nor suffer others to hurt you any farther than he will turn it to your real Advantage, and punish them for it.

Child. If I could be secure from their injuring me any more, methinks I should be sorry to have those who have injured me severely punished.

Parent. You do well to cherish such a forgiving Temper; and if you forgive your Enemy, and he sincerely repent, God will forgive him likewise. In that Case, his Repentance is Punishment sufficient, and may give you the juster Pleasure, as it will not only sufficiently avenge you, but also prove a sure Means of reforming him, and doing him, in the End, the greatest Good.

Child. Since you have said so much about Evil, pray inform me what is Evil, that I may know precisely what will offend my heavenly Father, and what, on the other Hand, he approves.

Parent. That is a very pertinent and important Enquiry, and, that I may answer it the more distinctly, I will take another Opportunity for it, having already over-stayed my Time. Farewell, my Dear.

Child. Farewell, Papa, and thank you for spending so much of your precious Time upon me.

Ejaculation. SOLUS.

O Heavenly Father, who art always present with me, teach me thy Will. Speak, Lord, and thy Servant will hear.

D I A L O G U E IV.

Betwixt the MOTHER and CHILD.

Child. **P**RAY, Mamma, where is my Father?
Is he gone from Home?

Mother. Yes, my Dear, he went out this Morning very early.

Child. When will he return?

Mother. I hope in the Evening, at farthest; and sooner, if he can dispatch his Business. Why do you ask after him? But I know it is because you love your Father.

Child. I do indeed, and honour him, and you too very much, as I am in Duty and in Gratitude bound. Methinks I see, even now, by my little Sister in your Arms, something of the Care and Trouble you took with me before I was able to set my Foot to the Ground, or help myself in the least; since that I have been made sensible of your
continued

continued Care and Kindness towards me, in innumerable Instances; but in nothing else so much as in the Pains you both take to instruct and form my Mind.

Mother. I am glad, my Dear, you are sensible of that, because you will be the likelier to improve by such Instructions, the more you apprehend the Kindness and Importance of them. But why did you think your Father was gone Abroad?

Child. Because you perform'd Divine Service in the Family this Morning; which you don't use to do when he is at Home.

Mother. since you took such Notice who officiated in that Service, I hope, my Dear, you went yet farther, and took Notice also what was said, and joined in it with the concurring Sentiments and Desires of your own Heart.

Child. I assure you, I did; and * *prayed along with you every Word, tho' I did not speak*; and after what my Dear Father has told me concerning *God Almighty*, 'tis impossible I should ever hear that Divine Being spoken of, or spoken to, without being greatly concerned in it. I heard this Morning, to my Grief, some Children in the Street use the Name of God with great Freedom, Irreverence, and Indecency: Father forgive them

* These are the very Words of a Child, I think, scarce seven Years old, after I had prayed by him on his Death Bed; and of one too, I have reason to think had no great Advantage of Paternal Instruction; from which, and some other Instances, I cannot but think it of more Importance than is commonly imagined, that Children be early used to attend Divine Worship and Ordinances, and encouraged in all their Observations on them, and Inquiries concerning them. This is very agreeable to *Exodus xii. 26, 27.*

(thought

(thought I) they know not what they do; but what Parents must they have the while? And how distinguishedly bless'd am I in both mine? Sure there are no other Parents like you.

Mother. Many, I hope, Child, that are much better; and yet I am afraid there are more who are worse. Do you pray daily to God to dispose Parents more universally to instil into their Children early the Knowledge and Fear of God; and to bless our Endeavours of this Kind for you.—O! here is your Papa returned already.

Child. I am glad, then God has prosper'd him in the Business he went about, perhaps, Mamma, in Answer to your Prayers.

Mother. And his own and your's too, perhaps.

Child. Is it possible he should have any Regard to such a Child's Desires as mine?

Mother. Yes, or to the Cries, or Groans, or Sighs, or other Tokens of Distress, made by Creatures incapable of Thought, or Speech, or conscious Application to him, * as you are: But let us go welcome your Father Home.

DIALOGUE V.

Child. NOW, Sir, will you instruct me how to behave aright?

Father. I will, my Dear. *To behave aright is to behave suitably to the Nature, Uses, Relations, Rank and Character of every Person, and every*

* Tho' God may not always deliver them out of their Distresses, yet are they not forgot before him; a Sparrow falls not to the Ground without him.

Thing

Thing that is, or can be concerned in our Behaviour, as well as to our own ; and avoid whatever is contrary, or inconsistent therewith. For a Rational Creature to do thus of Choice, from a Consciousness that it is right, is Virtue or Morality. To turn it all into Religion, or the Fear of God, is only the doing all the very same out of Regard also to God, who sees all Things, and made them what they are, and is the great Patron and Approver of such right Action ; and a Disapprover of every contrary Action (tho' he may know how to turn even that to a wise, and good Account :) And to have a due Regard in all this to Jesus Christ, whom God hath sent for this Purpose, to restore and promote Virtue, and true Religion in the World, is Christianity. But this is what I shall inform you of more particularly hereafter. In Order to know what is right, and be convinced that it is so, you must attend to, and know something of the Nature of Things ; and first know yourself, that you are endowed not only with bodily Parts and Members, and Senses, as Head and Hands, Seeing and Hearing, and Animal Appetites, as Hunger and Thirst ; or Passions, as Fear, Desire, and the like ; but also with a rational Soul, to consider and weigh the Nature, Tendency, and Consequences of Things ; to controul your own Actions, Appetites, and Passions accordingly ; that so you may ever act with the Approbation, of, and without Offence to, God, to your own Conscience, and to the Judgment of other Men, as much as may be consistent with the two former. In all your Thoughts, Words, and Actions, you are accountable to God, and your own Conscience ; and in many of them to your Fellow-Creatures, according as they fall under their Notice, or they are interested and concerned in them.

Child. I would first know my Duty to God.

Father.

Father. In one Sense all Duty, is Duty towards God ; as you may apprehend from what I have already said. But there are some Duties more immediately and distinctly owing to him ; as that you set him always before you ; consider him as always present with you ; think of him with the profoundest Reverence, and Respect, Trust, Delight, and Joy ; Thankfulness for his Mercies, and Resignation to his Will ; and exercise and cherish this Regard of your Heart to him, by frequent, affectionate, and humble Worship of him : That before all Things you obey him.

Child. What rather than you ?

Father. Yes, if I should command you any Thing contrary to, or inconsistent with his Commands ; which I hope I never shall, and then your Obedience to me will be Obedience to him, which is the Perfection of filial Duty.

Child. What are his Commands ?

Father. The deliberate Determination of our own Judgment and Conscience concerning what we ought to do, and to forbear, is *his Command, or Law written in our Heart* ; and for our yet better, and readier Direction, we *Christians* have his *revealed, written Precepts* which I shall instruct you in more particularly another Time, which *Jesus Christ* has summed up in a few comprehensive Words, that will give you at present a general Idea of them, namely, *That we love the Lord our God with all our Heart and Soul, and Mind, and Strength ; and our Neighbour as ourself* : By which you see our Duty to others, and ourselves too, is to be done as Duty to God, being included in his Commands.

Child. Is there any other Duty or Regard I owe to God ?

Father.

Father. Yes, that you imitate, as much as possible, his moral Excellencies; his Uprightness, Truth, and Goodness. This is paying him a due Regard, to make him your highest, choicest Pattern, and it is at the same Time a Duty you owe yourself, to make a right Use of such a Help to Virtue.

Child. Can I be under Obligations to myself?

Father. Certainly, very great ones; and if you neglect them, or act contrary to them, you'll find something within you will call you to a severe Account; I mean your own affronted *Reason*, and *Conscience*. God has given you these high Powers, and thereby raised you above the Brute Creation, and to a Life far above the mere Animal Life. You have Appetites and Passions in common with the Brutes; but you have also a rational Soul to direct, and govern those Appetites, and Passions. If you thus use your Reason, you'll improve it; but if you neglect it, you'll weaken it, and give an unnatural, and destructive Force and Strength to your animal, brutal Appetites and Passions, and degrade yourself into something much worse than a *Brute*, and much more miserable; nothing can be more degrading, more disgraceful, and detestable, than for a reasonable Creature not to be Master of himself, and his own Appetites and Passions.

Child. In what Respects am I, or any other Person, liable to be deficient in this Self-Government?

Father. In many Instances. Whenever your *Desires*, *Fears*, *Aversions*, or *Resentments*, are much excited, you will be liable to disregard the still, small Voice of *Reason*, or even the warmer Remonstrances, and Expostulations of *Conscience*,

Child. Can you give me any particular Instances?

Father. When you vehemently desire any Thing that pleases your Taste, or Fancy, you'll be in some Danger of not sufficiently considering whether it may not be really prejudicial to yourself, or others; or forbid you by *human*, or *divine Authority*; perhaps of indulging yourself in it, tho' you know and are told it is wrong in some, or all these Respects. There will be need of *Consideration*, and *Resolution*, in such a Case, to deny yourself. When you are very much afraid of any Thing, *the Anger of your Parents*, for Instance, or others, for having done what may displease them, you'll be under some Temptation to take some unfair Way to avoid what you fear; as by denying, perhaps, what you know to be Fact, which is doubling instead of lessening a Fault. When you have an Aversion to any Thing that is distasteful or painful, you'll be liable to refuse it, tho' it tend to a greater Good, even your own Health perhaps; or bear it, if you cannot possibly avoid it, with Impatience, and Fretfulness. When you are angry, whether justly, or unjustly, you'll be liable to avenge yourself, or endeavour it, without due Consideration, and in such a Manner, that you may find Cause afterwards to repent, and be ashamed of. When any of these Passions or Appetites hurry you away to act without Consideration, or a due Regard to what is Right, they overcome your Reason, and make you their Slave; and your giving such a frequent Loose to them, will render your Self-Government next to irrecoverable.

Child. How so?

Father. Because it will weaken your Reason, and Resolution, and heighten such Appetites and Passions into a kind of *Madness*, or *Frenzy*. Have
you

you never observed little Master, — what violent Passions he goes into, if he may not have, and do whatever he list; or seen our unhappy Neighbour — drunk in the Street?

Child. Yes, but I always took them, and others like them, to be *Fools*.

Father. You judge, indeed, very right: They are the worst of *Fools*; but then they are not naturally so, but become so by indulging, or being indulged in their Humours. They have Reason as well as you, or I, but have lost the Use of it, and you may easily do the same.

Child. I hope I never shall.

Father. I hope so too; but then it must be by proper Care. Your Mother and I have hitherto endeavoured to guard you against any dangerous Efforts of Appetite, Humour or Passion; but you must learn to guard yourself against them by that Time you go out into the World, or we may be taken from you by Death, and you owe thus much to yourself, to your Interest, and Comfort, Reputation, and Respect among Men, and to him that made you, and gave you Understanding for this Purpose. Both God and Man, and all intellectual Beings, must look down with the utmost Contempt upon a Wretch, that has lost that Government of himself, he was once endowed with; and even he himself, if ever he thinks at all, must despise, and loath, and be a Torment to himself. Therefore, my Dear Child, think well of this.

Child. I will.

Father. Farewell.

D I A L O G U E VI.

Father. **H**AVE you thought of what I said to you last?

Child. I have, and prayed to God to be the Guardian of my Understanding as long as I live, and to continue long to me the Benefit of your's, and my Dear Mother's excellent Instructions, and Example. But you intimated, that there were Duties owing to others, as well as more immediately to God and myself. What may these be?

Father. I will give you a short general View of them, as I have done of the other, reserving a more minute Discussion of all these Things, till you have got a tolerable general Notion of them. And with regard to *Mankind in general*, to all of the same Species with yourself, with whom you have any Thing to do, it is your Duty to speak, and act sincerely, truly, and uprightly, as you would desire they might by you, were you in their Place, and they in your's; without Deceit, Injury, or Contempt. That over and above this strict Justice towards them, you be kind, and compassionate, ready to do Good, as you have Opportunity, to all; especially to help, relieve, and comfort those who are in any kind of Need or Affliction; and that not only those who have been Friends, and Benefactors to you, or are likely to return the good Offices you do them, but also to Strangers; yea, even those who have done you Wrongs. In all these Cases, you are to do them Good with Pleasure, in Imitation of God, and expecting your Reward from him.

Child.

Child. O! I long to exercise, and shew such a Sweetness and Greatness of Mind as this.

Father. It is indeed the highest Perfection the human Mind can attain to, and the most resembling God. But besides these *general Duties*, there are some *particular ones* which arise from the *Relations* we stand in to others; as *Husbands*, and *Wives*, mutually to love each other beyond any other Person in the World, and preserve the strictest and the tenderest Friendship till Death, and maintain each others proper Respect and Authority over the rest of the Family. *Children*, whose Duty is to love, honour, and obey their *Parents*, and support them, if need be, in their turn, as they have been supported by them: To which the Duty of *Subjects to Magistrates and civil Governors*, under whom they live, is not much different. *Parents* again, and *Magistrates* to govern them by just Laws, and with Tenderness, and protect, instruct, and render them as safe, and virtuous, and useful and happy in Life as may be. *Masters* to pay their *hired Servants* their Wages, and exact but a reasonable Service from them, considering them as of the same Species with themselves; and having a regard to their Welfare, both of Soul and Body, as well as their own Accommodation. *Servants* to be diligent, and submissive, true and faithful to the *Interests*, as well as the *Commands* of their *Masters*, *Superiors* in Station and Fortune, to be condescending; *Inferiors* to be respectful and contented with the lower Lot in Life, and not envy those above them. *Brothers* and *Sisters*, *Neighbours* and *Countrymen*, to love one another mutually, like Fellow Members of the same Community, whose social Interests are united by those Ties of *Nature*, or of *Providence*, jointly to pursue them, and not seek each his own
alone,

alone, but each other's Welfare, as Opportunity will frequently occur.

Child. All these Duties you have mentioned, or hinted at, to *God, ourselves, or others*, are highly reasonable at first View. Methinks no-body should ever act contrary to them, at least, I hope, I never shall.

Father. Let not my Dear Child, however, be too secure, because many a very promising Person has failed in his Duty in such Instances, and to such a Degree, as not even themselves could once have expected, or believed they would have done some Time before-hand. When the Prophet of the Lord, with Tears in his Eyes, foretold what Cruelties *Hazael* would commit on the Children of *Israel*; burn and demolish their Cities; slay their young Men with the Sword; dash their Children; and rip up their Women with Child; *Hazael's* Answer was, Is thy Servant a Dog, that he should do this? Yet such a Dog he proved, after he had first murder'd his Sovereign, and usurped his Throne. When our Lord *Jesus Christ* foretold his Disciple *Peter*, just before his last Suffering, *This Night wilt thou deny me thrice*; *Peter* made Answer, *Tho' I should die with thee, yet will I not deny thee*: But he did before the next Morning.

Child. These Instances are surprizing, and alarming indeed. But what should ever induce me to act a Part I at present so much, and so justly abhor, or forsake the fair, and flowery Paths of Virtue?

Father. I will take another Time to lay before my Dear Child the principal Dangers of this Kind for your timely Warning. In the mean while, think of the *Beauty of Virtue*, and set your Heart upon it. God bless you.

DIALOGUE VII.

Father. **I** Am now to inform my Dear Child of the manyfold Dangers you are encompassed with, of gradually impairing, and losing that Innocence, and those virtuous Principles, of which you seem at present happily possessed, that being *fore-warned*, you may be *fore-armed*.

Child. For that very Purpose I desire to know them, and hope I shall make that Use of the Information.

Father. The first then that you will probably be exposed to, arise from your *bodily, animal Appetites and Passions*. These are, in their proper Place, and within their proper Bounds, useful and necessary in the present State of Things. All the Danger arising from them, is of their breaking thro' those Bounds, becoming your *Masters*, and governing, instead of advertizing, and gently prompting you. God has given you Reason to check, restrain, and controul them; but if you neglect this, and too much and inconsiderately indulge them, Reason will lose so much of its Power over them, and they will increase theirs over you, till you are become a perfect Slave to them; and are, in a Manner, unable to deny their most extravagant Cravings, or violent and mischievous Impulses; which is a most abject State indeed. Innumerable are the Inconveniences, and ill Consequences of the ungovern'd Indulgence of your Appetites and Passions, besides the just Shame and Disgrace of it amongst Men, the Reproaches of our own Consciences, and the displeasing the
great

great Father of our Spirits, by neglecting, and abusing his most distinguishing Gift of *Reason*.

Child. But it seems easy to prevent all this by never letting loose the Reins.

Father. True, my Dear, that is the most effectual Way, and you may think it easy at present to deny, and govern those Appetites, and Passions, which *your Parents* have hitherto had a watchful Eye over, and kept under the best Regimen they could. Now that Care must devolve by Degrees upon yourself, and if you steadily proceed, you will find it easy still, and pleasant. But if this Care and Government be ever remitted, it may become very difficult, and next to impossible to recover it. There is scarce a more useful, or comfortable Thing than *Fire*, or more easily managed, within proper Bounds, kindled, or extinguished, increased, or diminished, by applying, or with-holding Fuel; but if too much increased, or neglected, and let to get hold of the Building, it may soon become too vehement to be suppressed, and consume the stateliest House or Town to Ashes. Such is the Quality, very nigh, of the human Appetites and Passions.

Child. It would be base and foolish indeed in me to lose that Government of myself, which *God* and *you* have made so easy to me. If this is all the Danger, tho' it be considerable, I hope I am in a fair Way to escape it.

Father. You are, thank God, but yet, be not secure. This is not all the Danger by a great deal.

Child. Then let me know the worst.

Father. Another Source of Danger to your Virtue, and the greatest perhaps of all, arises from *the World you live in*. You know little of it, have been industriously kept from any Intimacy with
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the worst Part of it, that Virtue might take some Root in your Heart, before you were so exposed to Temptation; but, if you live, you will unavoidably have more Acquaintance with it; for you have a Part to act upon this common Stage; and whenever you enter, you will find the far greater Part of Mankind act very different from what you have been taught is right, indulging every Appetite and Passion, and glorying in their Shame; neither fearing God, nor regarding Man; ridiculing Virtue, and all Religion; and incessantly, and by all Manner of Ways fair and foul, soliciting those of better Education to follow their mad, audacious Example.

Child. Such Wickedness will certainly be very shocking to me, and put me more upon my Guard against them.

Father. Probably it will be so at first; but *frequency*, and *familiarity* will be in Danger of lessening, by Degrees, that Horror; and then there is something so extremely insinuating and catching, such a subtil, unheeded *Infection* in continued bad Examples; that, without the utmost Circumspection, and Resolution, will lead you insensibly, e'er you are aware, into some or other of their Evil Words, or Actions. *Curiosity* too, for untried Gratifications may have a fatal Effect upon you, especially when industriously and artfully raised by all the descriptive Arts and Blandishments that Wit and Humour can devise; and the Temptation compleated by a seemingly favourable Opportunity concurring; and, when once ensnared, you will find a thousand Bars to your Retreat; a distrustful Dread of God and Conscience, and all your former best Acquaintance, instead of that filial Fear and Love you once experienced towards them. An enchanting Hardness will creep upon

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your

your Heart, till it has incruſted it all over as with the hardeſt of Stone. With your *Innocence*, you will loſe your *Delicacy*; like the neat Perſon that fears to have a Spot upon him, when he has once accidentally fallen into a Slough, and defiled himſelf, plunges on afterwards, thro' thick and thin, without that Niceneſs and Reluctance he felt before. Beſides all this, and much more, there is a ſubtil, evil, malicious Spirit, which the Scriptures warn us of, and exhort us to reſiſt; who firſt introduced Sin into the World, and is ever ready with his Wiles to contribute to deceive unwary Souls, and ſet in with all theſe Kinds of Temptation, in order to effect your Ruin. O, my dear Child, as pleaſed as I am with your preſent good Diſpoſition of Mind, as thankful as I am to God for it, as much as I hope, as well as wiſh your everlaſting Welfare, my very Soul within me trembles for you, when I think of the Trials your Virtue has probably to encounter in this evil World.

Child. O! my dear Father, you make me tremble too, leaſt ſuch a Succeſſion, ſuch a Complication of Temptations ſhould, in ſome unguarded Moment, overcome me.

Father. This Fear of your's revives my Heart, and will by the Grace of God preſerve your Virtue. Treat it as you would your *Guardian Angel*, be ever very regardful of its alarms; for they are of the utmoſt Neceſſity to your Safety.

Child. But why has God expoſed the Virtue of his poor Creatures to ſuch *Attacks* and *Dangers*?

Father. For the confirming, ſtrengthening and exalting of it. The moſt glorious Triumphant Creature-Virtue, is *victorious Virtue*, and the more, greater, and compleater its Victories, the more confirmed, triumphant, and glorious it is. But Victory implies preceding Combat, and the greateſt Victories are thoſe over the moſt formidable Oppoſition,

Opposition, and that succeed the hardest Conflicts. Be alarmed therefore, but do not murmur at any such Trials as these any more than needlessly run into them, leave God to chuse your's; and along with your greatest possible Caution and Resolution, seek, and trust in him to bring you safely, and honourably off.

Child. But now another Apprehension comes into my Mind, seizes, and almost sinks my Spirits.

Father. What can that be, Child?

Child. I fear least I have already broken thro' the sacred Bounds of my Duty, and so lost my *Innocence* and *Virtue*. Some Words and Actions of my past Life, as well as secret Workings of my Heart, appear to me not so perfectly agreeable to the excellent Rules you have taught me, as I could wish; nor have I Ignorance to plead, tho' not then so well instructed as since: For, well I remember, at the very Instant, something within me smote me, and suggested I did amiss. As I have already offended God, I fear he should abandon me, and then I am undone, nor do I know how he will deal with me for my past Faults.

Father. There is *Forgiveness* with God for worse Sinners than you.

Child. I would willingly hope so; but are you sure of that; or do you only hope as I do?

Father. I am very sure, and doubt not to make you so too, when I can be at Leisure to talk with you again on these Heads.

D I A L O G U E VIII.

Child. MY dear Papa's last Discourse left me in an uneasy Suspence betwixt *Hope and Fear.*

Father. I will endeavour to make you ample Amends for it now, and open to you such a *Scene of divine Grace*, as will, I am sure, surprize and delight you; and if I am not much mistaken, win your Heart to God, and Virtue forever.

Child. O! begin then, I am all Attention, and will not interrupt you with Questions.

Father. God Almighty desires not the Death of Sinners; but that they turn from their Iniquities, and live. He wants not Inclination to forgive them. But, alas! the bare Forgiveness of Sin would be to little Purpose, or even to bad Purpose, unless Sinners are turned from it at the same Time, and restored to their right Mind; to the Practice of Love and Virtue. Sin is its own Punishment. How shall that *Punishment*, which arises from the very Nature of Sin, be possibly remitted otherwise, than by the Sinner's *Reformation*? For God to shew Mercy to Sinners, with Safety and Honour to all his other Attributes, must do it in such a Way, as is most likely, most powerful, and effectual to reform Sinners, and encourage Virtue; not the contrary. He is most ready therefore to forgive Sinners, even the worst of Sinners, not for their own Sakes, be it known unto them, but out of an honourable, and distinguishing Regard to some absolutely spotless, perfect *Character* amongst them; some one who should fulfil all Righteousness, and teach, and recommend it to others,

others, by a most glorious Example; who should be proved, and victoriously Virtuous, triumphing over all the greatest Temptations and Trials human Nature is ever exposed to; and having so merited this Post of Honour, and qualified himself for it, should become the high and only *Mediator* betwixt God, and a guilty, condemn'd, degenerate World; for whose Sake God would shew Mercy to them, and by whose Means they might be reformed, and brought back to him. But where shall the Man be found thus qualified, worthy, and able to undertake such a Task? Lo! for this Purpose, appears the most beloved, most glorious Son of God himself; who became Flesh, and dwelt amongst Men; was born of a Virgin, past thro' a State of Childhood and Youth; past thro' each Stage of human Life, exposed to Faintness, Want, and Fatigue, and the Scorn of Fools, with perfect Innocence and Virtue, and persevering Usefulness; resisting effectually the Devil, the World, and the Flesh; a Man of Sorrows, and acquainted with Grief; till at last, to compleat all, for our Sakes, out of unparalleled Love, and Good-will to Man, he voluntarily submitted to a causeless and unfair *Trial*, a most unjust *Condemnation*; and an untimely, cruel, and disgraceful *Death* upon the Cross. Having thus finished a most perfect *Character*, God raised him from the Dead, took him up bodily into *Heaven*, in the Sight of many Spectators; has seated him at his own Right-hand in Glory, and made him *the Saviour of the whole World*; that whosoever pays a due Regard to him, and he shall own at the last Day, should not perish, but have everlasting Life, whatever his former Transgressions have been. And the truest, and greatest Regard that can be paid him, is sincerely to imitate his Virtue. *They that*
do

do the Will of his Father in Heaven, the same, says he, are his Brother, and Sister, and Mother. To give this Grace of God its greatest Efficacy, it was necessary it should be published to the World. Our Saviour himself began the Publication of it, in his Life-Time, amongst the Jews, and after his Resurrection, gave Commission to his Apostles who had been Witnesses of his Life, Doctrines, Miracles, Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, to preach the Gospel to all Nations, and proselite them to him to be his Disciples, and Followers, to take his Yoke upon them, and learn of him, baptizing them for this Purpose into the Name of *the Father*, and of *the Son*, and of *the Holy Ghost*; and teaching them to observe all Things, whatsoever he had commanded them, and this they did. Thus you may observe a *Seminary* for Virtue set up in a vicious and corrupt World, and all Men every where are permitted, are invited, are called aloud upon to engage in this divine Scheme for Reformation. *Societies* are form'd, *Officers* and *Observances* appointed in them, for this Purpose. *Christ* is himself the universal Head of them all; and the *Holy Spirit of God* is among them, for the carrying on this grand Design. The worst of Sinners are encouraged to repent, that their Sins may be blotted out, and washed away by the Blood of *Jesus*, and the wisest Measures are directed to for training up a *Seed of Believers* to serve God thro' *Jesus Christ*, in order to prevent Sin as much as possible; as well as Cure, if possible, what cannot be thus prevented. Your *Parents* have long since resolved, that whatever others do, *they* and *theirs* shall serve the *Lord*, and *his Christ*; and have most solemnly engaged before *God*, and *his Church*, particularly for *you*, to train you up in the

the Nurture and Admonition of the Lord. All our Care to keep you separate, and unspotted from the World ; to instruct, and conduct you in the Paths of Virtue, are owing to, and directed by this Gospel Scheme ; are done out of Love and Respect to you, not only as our own *dear Offspring*, but still more as a *Disciple of Jesus Christ*, for whom he died, to whom, and to God through him, you have been devoted by us ; and to whom, I would most earnestly recommend it to you now, voluntarily to devote yourself.

Let this serve at present for a *general, distant View* ; and not a *full, minute Account of these Things*. This may employ many of our delightful Hours hereafter, if please God we both live ; and you shall read it yourself, in the *Sacred Records*. And now, what says my dear Child to all this ?

Child. I want Words to express *the Joy, the Gratitude, the devotedness to God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent*, which I feel within my own *Breast*.

Father. God bless my dear Child, and by his Holy Spirit, keep this for ever the Temper and firm Purpose of your Heart.

Child. Amen.

DO I need to recommend it to such Christian Parents, as shall think fit to take this or any other early Method with their Children to sow the Seeds of Virtue in their tender Minds ; that when they send them out into the World for Improvement in liberal Arts and Sciences, or useful Trades, or even dispose of them in Marriage, they chuse
such

such Masters, [Tutors, Governors or Governesses, Families and Companions for them, not to say Spiritual Pastors, likewise, as shall be most likely to carry on this Design; and not undermine it, and render all their former Care and Labour lost?

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13 MR 63



